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SOURCE Chinese document, Shang-hai Shih Lao-Kung tien-chien (Shang-hai Labor Yearbook), Ta-Kung News agency, Shang-hai, China, 1948. (Information specifically requested.)

SILANG-HAI WORKERS' LIVING CONDITIONS

Comparative Progress

Living conditions of Shang-hai laborers in 1947, while not ideal, show improvement over previous years. Wages are 50 to 200 percent above the prewar level, while the workday has been reduced from 10.61 hours to 9.94, and welfare projects have been notably expanded. Reasons for this improvement are (1) the government's labor policy of (a) fostering labor unions, (b) bettering workers' living standards, (c) promoting labor-capital cooperation, and (d) restrictions on toil (these items have been written into the Constitution and implemented in Shang-hai); (2) labor leaders have supplemented government efforts; (3) workers themselves have awakened, banded together, and gained legitimate advantages; (4) intelligent capitalists count workers' welfare projects not as a duty but as an asset in their business.

Living Conditions as Measured by Index

Wages in 1947 fell into three periods: (1) January to the middle of February, in which the basic wage was multiplied by twice the cost-of-living index; (2) February through April, in which wages were frozen at the highest January rate, with rationed sale of cloth, rice, and fuel to factory workers; and (3) May to December, with a modified cost-of-living schedule.

In a time of rapidly spiralling inflation, real wages are hard to deduce from actual amounts paid to the workers; it is better to use basic wages for comparison, as in the following tables:

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Comparison of Minimum and Maximum Wages Between 1937 and 1946

Industry	June 1937		December 1946	
	Min	Max	Min	Max
Thermos bottles	2	70	9.5	130
Utilities	13.5	100	30	123
Printing	10	100	24.25	122
Cigarettes	10	105	12	115.20
Machine-making	6	99	21	114
Can-making	12	80	18	96.50
Silk-weaving	12	40	18	96
Rubber	6	40	30	90
Electric supplies	3	42	21	90
Earthenware	6	45	10	88
Glass	6	60	9.60	87
Chemicals	7.50	27	23	81
Woolens	9	45	22.50	80
Handkerchiefs	5	16	15	75
Needle-making	10	60	16	75
Knitting	5	45	23.70	74
Nail-making	15	36.45	22.50	72
Papermaking	12	60	15	72
Box-making	14.26	66	6	72
Dyeing	14.00	20	12	72
Belt-weaving	5	12	27	67
Underclothing	6	30.50	12	66
Metal-casting	---	---	42	65
Camel wool	10	24	18	64
Cotton-spinning	18	39.50	27	63
Junk-building	18	21.60	46.50	55.50
Soap	6	47	27.30	55
Paint, varnish	18	42	25	55
Photo films	---	---	27.68	52.30
Leather	10	30	30	51
Hat-making	12	25	25	50
Drugs	12	50	26.40	49.50
Towels, blankets	---	---	31.50	45
Matches	---	---	12.60	45
Metal-working	---	---	15	40

Almost all industries show a large increase in wages from prewar figures, some to even more than fivefold. This is a progressive age and under the RRT labor policy the proletariat will of course organize to gain their legitimate benefits and escape from a mere animal existence.

Wages in addition to the fixed monthly minimum, include pay for extra work, pay rises, etc.; under the Factory Law, wages must be paid as usual for rest days and holidays. Many factories work as usual on such days; others do night work. Considerable diversity exists as to payment in such cases, but the Factory Law is carried out in an overwhelming majority of plants, and affects most workers. This is a great improvement over former days.

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Living Conditions as Measured by Work Hours.

Number of Workhours per Day and Workdays per Month
(Arranged in order of the number of hours worked per day)

Industry	Hours per Day	Days per Month
Paper-making	11.93	27.99
Oil-extracting	11.24	27.85
Flavor essences	11.07	30.40
Rubber	10.90	27.70
Glass	10.66	30.00
Cotton-weaving	10.49	26.48
Metal-working	10.49	27.52
Knitting	10.42	28.19
Silk-weaving	10.17	24.81
Wool-weaving	10.08	25.88
Cotton-spinning	10.06	25.81
Cigarettes	10.04	28.40
Needle-making	10.00	29.13
Sai-lu-lo [?]	10.00	20.00
Hemp-working	10.00	25.41
Hat-making	10.00	29.00
Towels, blankets	10.00	25.33
Belt-weaving	10.00	26.76
Thermos bottles	9.63	23.29
Lead pencils	9.50	31.00
Tiling	9.26	30.25
Flour	9.10	25.78
Canned goods	9.08	31.00
Flexible tubing	9.00	28.44
Underclothing	9.00	28.10
Can-making	8.91	28.13
Matcher	8.85	28.92
Machinery	8.83	26.72
Drugs	8.77	26.52
Electric fixtures	8.50	27.77
Printing	8.43	26.36
Coal gas	8.34	26
Boat-building	8.14	30.89
Acids and soda	8	27.07
Soap	8	26.54
Leather	8	29
Water works	8	26.47
Electric power	8	24.76
Electric cars	8	28.93
Telephone	7	25

As seen from the above table, the average workday is 9.94 hours, and while this is a long way behind the more advanced nations, it is still nine-tenths of an hour (50-54 minutes) shorter than in the prewar and puppet days.

The above is made clearer by a comparative table covering a succession of years:

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Industry	H o u r s			
	1930	1936	1941	1946
Machinery	9.16	9.19	9.65	8.83
Boat-building	9.00	8.62	--	8.14
Matches	6.89	10.00	10.00	8.85
Tiling	9.49	9.05	9.37	9.26
Cotton-spinning	11.50	11.50	11.51	10.06
Silk-weaving	10.46	11.50	11.12	10.17
Cotton-weaving	11.32	11.15	11.14	10.49
Wool-weaving	10.61	11.26	11.12	10.08
Underclothing	10.48	10.60	8.57	9.00
Stocking-knitting	10.51	9.36	10.98	10.42
Flour	11.50	11.50	11.35	9.10
Oil-extracting	11.50	9.77	11.38	11.24
Tobacco	8.69	9.80	8.20	1-.04
Papermaking	11.23	10.37	10.78	11.93
Printing	8.26	8.52	8.83	8.43
Average	10.61	10.57	10.84	9.94

A study of 240 factories in 40 industries shows night work done in 101 factories, or 42 percent, representing 19 industries. Persons employed in night work number 29,041, or a little more than 31 percent of the whole. The vast majority of these are in the cotton mills. Generally speaking, there are as many night periods as day; the average is 26 nights per month. The longest continuous shifts are 12 hours in the metal, oil-extracting, drug, and paper industries; the shortest, 6 hours, is in telephone work. The average shift is 10 hours.

The Factory Law provides for a half-hour rest period every 5 hours, but such is not the practice. At present, at best all the rest period, night or day, is used for lunch. The time allowed for lunch and rest in the 240 factories varies from 15 minutes to 2 hours, with 114 granting a half hour and 86 a whole hour. Twenty-seven plants, whose work is largely stand-by, make no special provision for time.

As to rest days, 4 days a month is the general practice. Some plants allow just one day, others six. Where there is little or no cessation of labor, it is because (1) the work is continuous in nature, (2) the product is much in demand, (3) piecework rather than hourly-work prevails. The schedule of 6 rest days prevails almost exclusively in the foreign-operated utilities, which have transplanted their national custom of 1½ days of rest for every 5 days of work.

There is great diversity in observance of annual holidays, the number of which varies from 5 to 20. Those most commonly granted are the ones named in the Factory Law and/or by proclamation; traditional festivals are sometimes added.

The National Factory Law holds up enlightened ideals; failure to realize these ideals is not due to the rapacity of the owners but to a fierce struggle in which our own sparse industrialization can scarcely compete.

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Welfare Projects

While the government's policy is to promote the welfare of labor, during 1947 there was such a struggle with Communists and Democratic Leaguers for hegemony of labor that little could be done. There were strikes, sabotage, parades, etc., mostly fomented by the Communists. The authorities were kept too busy meeting the turmoil over wage disputes to devote much time to promoting projects for workers' benefits. However, these officials were not lacking in interest, and, despite obstacles, did accomplish something. Welfare work by mill owners and by the city administration are described separately below:

1. Food and Lodging.

Factories which pay the adjusted wage scale do not include food; but since workers cannot go home for lunch, the plant furnishes meals, the cost of which is deducted at the end of the month. This has been the general practice since the end of the war. In some cases workers bring their own lunch, which is warmed in the factory. Of the 240 factories studied, about two-thirds supply meals; in the remaining third, the workers bring lunch.

More than half of the factories (mostly smaller ones) provide accommodations for single persons. However, these dormitories leave much to be desired in both equipment and management, and sanitation is largely lacking.

2. Extension of Clinical Service

Factory workers are frequently in need of medical care. Although larger plants have established clinics, there is a serious lack of equipment and drugs, and the more serious ailments cannot be treated with proper skill and care. Nevertheless, considerable improvement has been made during the past year.

In June 1947 the Shanghai Workers' Welfare Council and the China Labor Federation combined to establish a free clinic for workers on North Szechwan Road. The clinic has one service vehicle and eight substations. In the latter half of 1947, 27,745 persons received treatment through this agency.

3. Labor Hospital

Construction of this 240-bed hospital was begun in the summer of 1947 and the completed plant was to be dedicated on 1 May 1948. It is located in the mill district on North Yangtsepo Road.

4. Workers' Benefit Societies

These are of two types. One is city-wide, with membership including prominent citizens and labor leaders. Its aims are to provide medical aid, education, and amusement for the laboring class generally. The other type is welfare committees of the various groups of unions, of which there were six in 1947. There are also, 53 welfare clubs of individual unions and 17 other groups doing the same kind of work.

5. Food Rationing

In May 1947, when wages were unfrozen, rice began to soar in cost.

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It was arranged that each laborer could buy 2 pecks of rice at 24,000 yuan. Although though rice went up to 100,000 yuan a peck, the ration price remained steady. This method stabilized conditions for both owners and workers.

6. Cooperatives

The attempt to organize these in all the factories was unsuccessful. This was due partly to lack of managerial material and partly to the absence of urgency, due to abundant supply of goods. There are now 43 genuine labor cooperatives, mostly of the consumer type.

Comparative Statistics of Unions and Workers in Shanghai, 1947 (Figures are approximate)

Industry	No of Unions	No of Employees	
		Men	Women
Special	--	1,500	--
Utilities	15	12,000	275
Transportation	29	83,000	120
Cotton textiles	31	25,000	105,000
Wool textiles	15	1,800	5,600
Silk textiles	9	4,200	7,500
Knit goods	4	1,200	12,000
Dyeing textiles	30	7,700	15,000
Jute textiles	2	1,500	4,300
Cigarettes	32	13,000	25,000
Rubber	8	2,400	5,500
Leather	3	2,000	--
Machinery	20	8,500	--
Repairing, building	18	46,000	--
Sanitation	9	6,900	360
Chemicals, pharmacy, drugs	15	3,400	1,500
Amusements	6	2,600	1,300
Objects d'art, books, etc.	14	14,000	1,300
Paper-making	8	2,400	450
Shipbuilding	8	9,000	--
Clothing	27	16,000	1,500
Household wares	21	12,000	--
Food	45	31,000	1,300
Fuel	11	5,200	450
Others	15	9,500	270

(Note: These figures probably indicate union members, not occupational workers as such)

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